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A Library: A Silent Sign in City Development

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In modern international and government policies lifelong learning has become a key word to demonstrate the official interest in the self-education of citizens and the personal development of people. Examples of policy statements can be drawn from States, European Union, and international professional organisations such as IFLA. The shift from “permanent education” to “lifelong learning” goes beyond a mere change of terminology. It seems to indicate a change in focus and origin of initiative.

The Knowledge Society may serve many goals, and lifelong learning is one of them.

Libraries have been keen in indicating their (traditional) role in this newly defined field of policy making and activities, stressing that they can even offer more, making effective use of new technologies. Subjects can be addressed in well-prepared library portals, searches can be made on well-applied metadata. A whole world of knowledge management is developing.

Educational institutions and their supportive services delivered by libraries become centres of excellence, increasing the efficient output of students, researchers etc.

Cities who wish to demonstrate their investment in knowledge infrastructure and educational development, may also invest in new library buildings. Library design and architecture are necessary to make this new domain of learning more visible. New settings and facilities for studying and learning, integrating physical and virtual services, reflect a new image of libraries and become a new sign of city development. Successful examples are worldwide presented in professional presentations and books on city and library architecture.

Libraries play an important role in new forms of learning. Yet, a question remains: is authentic education and learning achieved by offering pre-programmed sources? Are true knowledge and experience based on the known or the unknown, on knowledge which can be systematised or on that which is not fashionable, not asked for, silent?

Artists and true thinkers know that real discovery, experience and knowledge lie in the unexpected, in that which was forgotten, in the silent moments in between. Would it be possible in the noisy Knowledge Society to develop libraries which allow also for this silent sign of human development?

The human capacity to learn has been the object of reflection, policy making and dubious practices. For what purpose is a human being learning, and for what purpose will his/her acquired learning be used? As soon as one person tells to another person what he or she should learn, something of the beautiful capacity will be lost. Learning is a case of freedom: it can only take place in a free atmosphere and environment; Learning pre-supposes an open mind, a preparedness to make efforts and to discover. Learning, discovering is a mission which is submitted to a human being at birth, a task which is sufficient to last for his whole life. In the end, it may result in that a human being has acquired a better understanding of himself and his environment, the world. Better understanding may contribute to a greater chance for peaceful existence.

These lines may summarise the ideas of international organisations which focus on the human capacity to learning and reflection as a major factor to improve human society. Human values, such as that every human being should be able to develop him/herself to the fullest potential and to use the individual talents, are central to these concepts. They are guaranteed in human rights.

Lifelong learning is most important, because we must give people conditions to exercise a right that is the right to know, to education, to culture throughout their life span. (Councillor, quoted in Calixto, 2001)

The recognition of the individual right to education and learning, as formulated in the 20th century, makes clear that States must do their utmost to realise these rights for every individual. Most States also do understand the necessity of education for employment and economic growth. All of this might not be very new. Wasn't it a classical Chinese philosopher who wrote: "When planning for a year—sow corn, when planning for a decade—plant trees, when planning for a lifetime—train and educate men."?

In the international world, it was UNESCO that has, from its beginning, actively worked for inspiring education, with opportunities for everyone. But a right to education, often legally translated in a school-obligation, was not enough. A human being needs to develop himself permanently: permanent education became the key-word for learning at all stages of life. In the sixties and seventies, in some parts of the world, the school was an institution under attack. Ivan Illich summarised the concerns in "*Deschooling society*". Learning should take place from the viewpoint and the interest of the learner, in stead of focussing on the programme dictated by government and society. Next to schoolish and formal learning, new forms of learning were introduced: less formal, aiming at development of the individual and society. All should have second chances to learning, in case their school careers had been short or insufficient. Accordingly, policies were developed, and many libraries cooperated with social and cultural organisations to support initial learning of many people with different backgrounds.

In the nineties, UNESCO reiterated its concerns in a new framework: lifelong education and lifelong learning. Jacques Delors introduced to UNESCO the report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, *Learning: the treasure within*, by stating: "... There is a need to rethink and broaden the notion of lifelong education. Not only

must it adapt to changes in the nature of work, but it must also constitute a continuous process of forming whole human beings—their knowledge and aptitudes, as well as the critical faculty and the ability to act. It should enable people to develop awareness of themselves and their environment and encourage them to play their social role at work and in the community.”

A number of factors contributes to the greater importance of lifelong learning. Developments in science and technology, changes in industrial structures, changes in the organisation of labour and work; growing world population, the influence of television and other media, the focus on the individual, environmental issues, and globalisation are some of these factors. In other words:

“Today, biographies of individuals are less predetermined and are thus more open to change than ever before. Modern ‘patchwork biographies’ are the result of such openness. At the same time, the indeterminate character of life assigns burden on the individual to make decisions about what to do and how to live” (Unesco, 2001).

Another initiative from UNESCO was a practical brochure published by the UNESCO Institute in Hamburg on the development of the concept: from permanent education to lifelong learning. But they “forgot” to include children. It means there has been, and still is some discussion about what the concept of “lifelong learning” actually encompasses.

1 The View of Libraries towards Lifelong Learning

In general two types of learning are identified and discussed: intentional learning and unintentional learning. Intentional learning stresses deliberate or purposeful learning; it implies those learning activities that follow a more or less structured plan of studies, with the purpose of obtaining a certification. These learners usually aim at developing skills and competencies that will be useful in their social and work lives.

Unintentional learning is considered as a non-structured way of learning, which takes place in everyday life, by which individuals improve themselves, simply by reading the newspaper, listening to the radio, reading a book, or attending a conference. This type of learning is a way of living, a life style.

One may even discern a third way of learning. Beyond this unintentional learning related to media, there is something else: life itself as the main teacher of life: a human being learns or has a chance to learn from his experiences, meeting and living with other people, facing difficulties, going through crises and finding new orientations and fundamental understanding. Such universal experiences of human life and possibilities are described in many library sources, witnessing of authentic life.

In any of these cases of lifelong learning, libraries have a lot to offer and have done so from the very beginning: The educational field appreciates the contribution of libraries to learning, but very often they only think of existing learning models of tutoring and tests. But there is more, libraries are familiar with a diversity of learning. Especially the contribution to unintentional learning is important: “Public libraries are unique in the way that they can

allow those tiny portions of learning to invisibly change people's lives." (Batt, 1998).

2 IFLA

The concept of lifelong learning has been included in the formal responses and position papers from the international professional organisations such as IFLA and EBLIDA. For example:

The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994) also highlights the importance of public libraries for lifelong learning:

"The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups."

The IFLA Guidelines for Public Libraries (IFLA 2000) consider the roles of public libraries in supporting lifelong learning at both deliberate and unintentional levels:

"The public library supports lifelong learning, working with schools and other educational institutions to help students of all ages with their formal education. The challenge of providing educational support provides an opportunity for public libraries to interact and network with teachers and others involved in education."

"It should also provide a range of materials on a variety of topics, which will allow people to follow their interests and education on an informal basis. The public library should also provide materials to support literacy and the development of basic life skills. In addition, the library must provide study facilities to students who have inadequate or no access to these facilities in their homes."

"To support formal and informal education—delivering raw and value-added material;"

"To support and inspire open adult learning;"

"To offer learning opportunities in workshops and in a good learning environment."

Furthermore, the IFLA Public Libraries section initiated a project to elaborate policies and gather best practices in the field of services related to lifelong learning. Another Section, on Continuing Professional Education and Workplace Learning should also be mentioned, as its existence and activity show the special interest for lifelong learning of librarians themselves, apart from the well-known LIS-institutions.

3 European Policy Making on Lifelong Learning

On the European level, a variety of activities can be discerned. A first European report on indicators of lifelong learning was issued by the European Commission's DG for Education and Culture in 2002. This was the result of the Working Group on Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning which comprised representatives from 35 countries, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organisation (UNESCO) and the European Commission. It examined the quality of lifelong learning in four central areas: skills, competencies and attitudes; access and participation; resources for lifelong learning; and, strategies and systems.

The report shows that Europe, as a whole, is not performing adequately in the area of

skills and competencies. In respect of scientific literacy, between 7% and 32% of 15-year-olds could be considered lacking in the requisite skills and knowledge for productive lifelong learning in this area.

In the first European documents, the European Union formulated a short definition of lifelong learning—all activities aimed at extending knowledge and skills—in terms of working for employability, active citizenship, social inclusion and personal development. Active citizenship is related to the question whether people wish and can participate in all aspects of social and economic life. Paid work means a key source to independence, self-esteem and well being, and consequently, to quality of life. Employability thus becomes an essential factor to reach full employment and a competitive role for Europe in the “new economy.” The availability of skills and knowledge to participate in social-economic life are therefore essential prerequisites for active citizenship and employability.

4 EBLIDA, European Library Lobby

Initially, the potential of libraries to contribute to lifelong learning was hardly recognised in European documents and only mentioned among many other possible agencies for local learning centres.

EBLIDA, the European Lobby Bureau of Libraries and Archives responded to the consultation which was organised by the European Commission, to hear the views of various social and cultural agencies. EBLIDA stressed the key role of libraries, which are “not just service places, but active partners offering access, professional guidance and training to global resources in a local setting.”

The Commission published a *Communication*, which acknowledged other than purely economic perspectives in the definition of lifelong learning. The main elements of a coherent strategy are: investments in human resources; adequate teaching—and learning methods and development of education and learning contexts; easy access to information and advice on professional education opportunities throughout Europe; supply of courses close to home, supported by ICT.

And, at least it included two references to libraries: providing access to information on studies and careers; and, serving as multifunctional centres for lifelong learning. Both from the Commission’s *Communication* and the *Memorandum on Lifelong learning* it becomes clear that the EU wishes an integrated and coherent strategy. The European Parliament requested sharper definitions about basic skills, informal learning, and the mutual recognition of diplomas throughout the European Union.

Compared to documents about the previous concept of permanent education, the concept of lifelong learning seems to have stronger economic roots and motives. Although it is acknowledged that it must be understood as all learning activity undertaken throughout life, children are in fact not mentioned in follow-up reports on the European Space for Higher Education. The employment-related perspective is rather prominent. Apart from a change in focus, the new concept requires that a person takes initiative when he or she needs skills for new task. So, although the major interests come from work-related issues, the individual

becomes far more responsible and self-reliant for his or her knowledge and skills, also in the work situation.

5 National Policy Making on Lifelong Learning, Example: The Netherlands

Nowadays, most States have been eager to show their official interest in lifelong learning. Commissions have formulated definitions and presented plans for implementation. In the Netherlands, about 10% of the population has not a sound educational basis for work; 25% of young people (25-29 years old) have no diploma to start working. The Social-Economic Council therefore discerned two aspects in its report on lifelong learning: employability of people and personal development. It made a plea to open new learning opportunities for vulnerable groups, including immigrant women, refugees and functional illiterates (10%). People should receive introductions to make use of new media and to improve information literacy.

The Netherlands Public Library Association has taken up "lifelong learning" in its annual plan, published a basic document and developed initiatives in cooperation with other organisations to support new forms of learning. Connections with institutions for adult education have been re-established. Media-education, aimed at supporting information literacy, had already been addressed in earlier initiatives.

The association also participated in the European library project PULMAN to collect best practices with a view of integrating new technology in library services. In this context a guideline for services in the field of lifelong learning was developed: "Public libraries are major learning resource centres. They should be the local learning place and champion of the independent learner. The development of their services requires the establishment and maintenance of strong partnerships with other organisations. There is also a requirement to provide access to and to package effectively a greater variety of good quality, relevant and attractive learning content of local relevance to use within new IST-based learning environments. Possible services are:

- providing public access to the Internet;
- provision of IST-based study facilities and learning environments;
- open and/or structured access to courses leading to accredited qualifications such as the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL);
- e-Learning environments e.g. a combination of Internet, telephone, videoconferencing and broadcast television, signposted and packaged content and Web-based services;
- networked reference desks."

These suggestions and the best practices referred to, such as in Latvia, Germany and the United Kingdom show the possibilities of libraries in new terms for lifelong learning. The terminology is very much focussed on instrumental service delivery for intentional

learning: IT-spaces, information literacy, course ware.

6 Critical Look at the Library's Responses

Generally speaking, libraries have responded positively to the concept of lifelong learning. They have recognised the role they already played from the very beginning of their services, to support the individual in exploring life, enjoying culture, pursuing his personal interests in multiple things and aspects of living, posing queries, forming his opinion etc.; in short developing himself as a unique human being. This role of libraries has been elaborated at the time of policies on permanent education.

Public libraries operating in the new environment of life long learning "have been rediscovering the established role of supporting learners. By doing this, they are also reshaping themselves in order to respond to increasingly diversified demands in terms of their resources, services and activities." (Calixto, 2001) In this new era of lifelong learning, libraries have pointed out what services they can and do offer, and what potential role they could play.

Aspects such as easiness and equality of access, informal setting, unstructured opportunities for learning, professional services etc. have been highlighted.

The services libraries can provide may be summarized as follows:

1. Provision of resources for lifelong learning
 - books, materials
 - information and communication technology
 - spaces and facilities, e.g. language lab
 - professional staff
2. Information about education and learning
 - e.g. self-instructional or open learning materials; audio-visual materials; broadcasting and broadcast-related materials;
 - education and training opportunities; programmes of local organisations
3. Counselling and support
 - provision of space for study group meetings, classes etc.
 - educational guidance, to find tuition and external assessment, included in open and distance learning
4. Animation and activities
 - e.g. lectures, short courses, presentation of learning results
 - highlighting oral knowledge; social and cultural heritage

Surveying libraries' responses to lifelong learning, one may conclude that they can be found at local, national and international level. The national associations have also responded to their government.

An evaluation of these responses shows preservation of human values, recognition of human rights, and maintenance of professional values.

Still one may have a critical look at them, even be suspicious about the eagerness with which libraries have thrown themselves in the middle of this political and economic issue.

One point of criticism is that libraries very often respond to new policies by saying that they have been providing these services “since ages”. The only thing missing is the full recognition of this role by authorities and policy makers, or the public in general. If this role was an obvious one, has it been presented prominently enough to be recognised? one may ask.

Another point is that libraries have mainly responded to proposals and policy papers, but they have hardly been involved in the preparation of policies and drafting of documents. One reason is of course, as they were not recognised at partners, they were not invited to drafting committees. The other reason is more serious: apparently, libraries have not been following and anticipating upcoming policies and observed the issues fit for a political agenda in time.

The last two years, IFLA consulted its members, not only in large council meetings, but also in presidential round table meetings. The first presidential theme was “Lifelong literacy”, making the connection between literacy (at large), libraries and lifelong learning, very explicit. Advocacy, being at the forefront of policy making which affects the field and activities of library and information services, turned out to be the strategic priority number one for many members. Anticipating regulations and changes in the international field requires, however, a different type of organisation; a new orientation and focus of members and their professional activities. IFLA and its members are working on this change in focus, through awareness raising activities especially of the library associations. This re-orientation is equally necessary for libraries and library organisations at local, regional and national level.

Many issues in modern policy making can be related to library services: lifelong learning, knowledge society, knowledge management. It depends on the perception and interpretation by libraries how they see their own role in these strategies. As we all know, these strategies sometimes do not last very long—as politics very often are fuelled by the vanity of the day —; tomorrow there might already be another council or government, with no memory of past policies and promises. Libraries are, however, intended to live beyond the life of library directors and politicians. It is therefore necessary to be careful when getting involved in temporary slogans.

Nowadays, many directors and boards of libraries and library organisations face the dilemma of presenting the library and its services as intrinsic value to individuals and society or “selling” the library concept with all its facilities to the “policy of the day”. As libraries have a universal orientation and mission, they are supportive to many aspects of life and society and therefore may easily become “instrumental” to all kinds of politics. This may help to find some extra funding, but may cause the risk that it will not or no longer be valued on its own terms. In doing so, in the long run, libraries might endanger their structural subsidies for basic collections, and providing basic services and facilities.

It depends very much on the interpretation by libraries themselves what role they will play in lifelong learning and in what way they develop themselves as learning organisations. An early report points out that innovation is expected: “*A learning library needs to think in terms of supporting learning rather than simply delivering materials*” (Brophy, Allred &

Allred, 1996). Furthermore, libraries also need to analyse their own concepts and objectives and be critical to the services they deliver. The next step will be to convince city councils and other library authorities of the need for new library facilities, investments and up-to-date educational and learning services to citizens.

7 City Development and Library Architecture

City councils may be convinced of the need for lifelong learning facilities for various reasons. A strong IT-image and modern infrastructure are only the beginning. Many cities have understood that local industries and business can only flourish when employees have opportunities to attain higher educational levels in view of adequate payment. Employers value a city which has a highly attractive socio-cultural climate, offering challenges and entertainment, even adding a cultural note to the seat of the enterprise.

Cities who wish to demonstrate their investment in knowledge infrastructure and educational development, may also invest in new library buildings. Library design and architecture are necessary to make this new domain of learning more visible. New settings and facilities for studying and learning are necessary. New questions have to be solved: is integrating physical and virtual facilities the best service: should the space for retrieval of digital sources be combined with room for close-reading of text books? What is a suitable place for a language lab: close to the music department or near a self-learning corner? Do we need different departments for self-study, related to age or for less intentional learning, in order to encourage certain age-groups? How do we create attractive spaces which enhance unintentional learning: picking up a book, listening to music, glancing at an exhibition? Attempts to answer these questions are manifold; in any way they create library spaces which reflect a new image of libraries and become a new sign of city development. Successful examples are worldwide presented in professional presentations and books on city and library architecture.

At a recent European conference called "Creating Public Paradise", we learned about examples from various countries Estonia, Portugal, Slovenia, Norway etc. and visited some new ones in the Netherlands: Amstelveen, Huizen, The Hague, the restyled libraries in Rotterdam, and the new cultural complex CODA in Apeldoorn (architect Herman Hertzberger) which combines the municipal library, museum and archive. This city has made a great investment in cultural buildings, enriching the city and supporting community life.

This European conference focussed on strengthening co-operation and dialogue between government, libraries and architects to create sustainable public library buildings. The aim was twofold: 1) to exchange views on the opportunities for creating sustainable public library buildings, which meet the changing needs of citizens in the 21st century; and 2) to promote international cooperation in finding solutions for building public libraries throughout Europe. In the preparation of the meeting, participants submitted national data on the state of the art in public library building in their respective countries.

Based on these data and on the exchange of views during the conference, the conference

participants agreed at the end of their meeting on some principles, acknowledging a.o. the role of libraries as “centres for lifelong learning. They provide people of all ages with information, ideas and materials for learning, widening their horizons, enhancing their abilities and skills as citizens, extending their knowledge and cultural taste.”

Expert-participants recommended to including public libraries as important public spaces in new city planning and development. In recognition of the increasing demands from library users, authorities, city councils should support the reshaping of public libraries. They should facilitate investment and maintenance of indispensable infrastructure and innovations for public information and library services from adequate buildings. When a city has understood the value of a visible sign of citizens’ development, of a dynamic view on the community in the shape of a library building, they should of course include librarians and their expertise in conceptualising, building and constructing such signs of the Knowledge Society. This cooperation may also be extended to the international level. There, opportunities for architects and designers should be created to including public libraries in their international studies, education and professional development. (The Conference Recommendations are forwarded to the Council of Europe; conference proceedings are published by the Netherlands Public Library Association, 2004)

8 Image of Human Being

Against the background of all these initiatives in various fields to promote and enhance lifelong learning, one may ask what image of human beings lies behind these policies and strategies.

This question has been studied by two Belgian researchers with a view to the content and consequences of the announced establishment of a European Space for Higher Education by 2010 (Bologna Declaration). They give, summarized, the following description:

The final aim and objective is to have a position on the market, to be ahead of other competitors. Thinking about individuals is thinking in terms of their competencies. People need to have competencies in order to be included in society. So it seems as if their human right to be respected as a human being and be treated as such—social equality—has become dependant on the requirement for inclusion: that they are willing to work for competencies and prepared to learning during their whole life. The focus has shifted from ‘lifetime employment’ to “lifetime employability”. Working on curriculum vitae,—an interesting one—has become an ambition, sometimes an obsession for students and others. Life is no longer what we live; it has become a *project* which has to be managed well, with the right skills and competencies, the adequate networks and contacts.

The way in which the policies and objectives for lifelong learning are formulated shows a vocabulary of entrepreneurship. The individual is considered as the manager of his own life. Through skilled self-management with adequate investments in learning, competencies and knowledge the self-enterprise will acquire a good market position. There are always risks in being in the market. But this unpredictability can be diminished by investing in human capital, in the form of social contacts, networks etc. Note that human relationships

are considered as values related to the enterprise, not as values in themselves. All things in the life project depend on making adequate choices.

In this entrepreneurial formulation of life, learning takes on a different meaning as well. Learning is formulated in terms of a learner who is willing and prepared to learn, and can manage most of life through learning. The learner has to recognise his learning needs and is highly responsible for the learning process. Learning is also defined as dependent on stimulating learning environments and contexts. The learner constructs and derives his learning from this environment. The educator becomes a facilitator of learning environments and offers learning opportunities, adapted to the individual needs and competencies of the learner. Therefore, the relation between learner and educator takes the form of a *contract* between equal parties. Self-evaluation and assessment are tools in this learning process towards self-management. Learning is entrepreneurial learning. The individual becomes a customer of his own enterprise. The researchers focussed on the terminology used in official policy papers and new administrative measures, wondering what image of a human being is presented through these texts and actions.

This description of a system of self-governance, including tools such as monitoring, self-evaluation etc. is also valid for institutions such as hospitals, schools, or... libraries. It is not difficult to recognise the terminology of quality management, self-governing teams, monitoring tools and self-assessment in articles on new library organisation and management. The discussion on library education and professional training is formulated in terms of competencies and necessary skills. So we have to ask ourselves: is this what we want, is this responding to our mission?

We think we are doing well in guiding people in our libraries through the vast jungle of information sources. We train them to make use of an increasing number of tools to seek and find even more sources. At the same time, we reorganise our sources, both on the shelves and in digital format, so users may find materials more easily through any kind of key words. We make increasingly efforts to form dossiers on subjects of interests, to maintain general and dedicated portals; to invent new ways of browsing and querying.

All our efforts are focussed on making our systems work more efficiently: faster networks, meta-searching, multimedia responses, retrospective digitisation; increasingly also: better reference interviews, chatting between librarians and users to get at the adequate query and requested material. We measure our outputs and outcomes; we give feedback to each other and are aware of the need to train ourselves permanently.

We speak to schools and university staff; find out about learning programmes and methods, adapt the library services to them, adapt ourselves to roles of providing stimulating environments, reducing information illiteracy by numerous courses. So users may find all they need for studying, learning. The library becomes an efficient enterprise; the librarian, director a cultural entrepreneur. ("Cultural entrepreneurship" was the term with which a Minister of Culture in the Netherlands promoted his cultural policy, also to libraries. I have to admit he was a professor in economics)

In what terms do we consider the users of libraries? How do we write about our policies?

In what way do we wish to relate to people visiting the library? What is the image of a human being behind all our services? Are we cultural entrepreneurs, focussing on an efficient enterprise, delivering well-informed citizens, culturally educated users, literate children, empowered women, socially included immigrants?

All these groups are addressed by government and local politics in order to include them all in the Knowledge Society. This definition of society may call for knowledge, knowledge management. It may consider knowledge services as any other service: a package you can buy or borrow; a bunch of texts and documents to be studied; a skill to be learned.

Do we want to work in self-imposed learning conditions; do we want to work on lifelong learning with our users in these entrepreneurial terms? Do we have a choice? Are we doing well when we have become an efficient learning institute?

The library may do well and play its part in the Knowledge Society. It may work for its position in the 'market' and cry, as other do, to sell its products and services. The Knowledge Society is a noisy society. It requires all the time attention; attempts to draw permanent attention of its citizens, users, learners, people: Look here, this is an opportunity; this is the best choice; look what this will give you; invest in yourself, make yourself knowledgeable in ICT, engineering, family affairs etc; it is worth to spend your time on this; be competent!

9 A Silent Sign of Human Development

A library building may take a prominent place in a city. It will have a prominent role in city development. It will help citizens to work, to study, to learn. It will be a landmark for a public, accessible learning environment. It will proudly show a city's will to invest in human capital. Will it also help people to really live in whatever the society is called?

This question remains: is authentic education and learning achieved by offering pre-programmed sources? Are true knowledge and experience based on the known or the unknown, on knowledge which can be systematised or on that which is not fashionable, not asked for, silent? Artists and true thinkers know that real discovery, experience and knowledge lie in the unexpected, in that which was forgotten, in the silent moments in between. Artists and true thinkers have therefore always been a threat to those in power, those who wish to control; education and learning are powerful tools, for control *and* for liberation.

Would it be possible in the noisy Knowledge Society to develop libraries which allow also for a silent sign of human development?

Is there a place for nomads in the Knowledge Society? For those who are aware of the system of self-imposed learning; who know that they form part of it, but also have the inner freedom to relieve themselves of purposeful actions.

Is there a place to take refuge, to withdraw—if only for a while—from the stress to manage your daily human capital wisely?

Is there a place to drop—if only for a while—all the learned: to un-learn.

Is there a place to be relieved—if only for a while—from the noises of the market?

Is there a place for the purposeless, the useless, that which has no voice?

What else could it be than a library, a silent library?

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